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Group 2700

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application:

Serial Number: 08/746,613

Filing Date: 11/12/96

Inventor : Geoffrey B. Rhoads

Title: Computer System Linked by Using  
Information in Data Objects

Art Group: 2721

Examiner: Couso, J

Docket: EWG-082

Date of this paper: December 7, 1998

Assistant Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

**Response to Office Action Dated 09/08/98**

The subject application includes claims 1-5. Claims 1-5 were rejected in an office action dated 09/08/98. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-5 is respectfully requested for the reasons set out below.

Applicant also notes that a new Power of Attorney with a new correspondence address and a new attorney docket number have been submitted with a separate cover letter. The new correspondence address (and the new telephone number) given in the new power of attorney is the address and telephone number given below for the undersigned attorney.

Applicant's claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Shear ('594) in view of Powell ('788).

The applicant's claims are directed to a novel multi-computer system which includes:

a) three computers with specific functions as follows:

- 1) a first computer which stores creator identifiers and creator contact data,
- 2) a second computer which is programmed to embed watermarks in digital images, each watermark including a creator identifier,
- 3) a third computer programmed to read the watermark in the digital images and to reveal a creator identifier,

b) each of the computers are connected to its own input and output devices,

c) a network which communicates the creator identifier revealed by the third computer to the first computer to obtain the creator contact data corresponding to the revealed creator identifier.

The invention as claimed is related to communication and "navigation" via the internet, that is, the world wide web (WWW). With the applicant's invention, internet "hot links" are provided using information embedded in data objects. With applicant's invention a data object can contain both a graphical representation and an embedded URL address.

It is noted that the use of a separate header with information about a file or image is conventional and in wide spread use. A conventional web page which has both a hot link and an image utilizes code which is separate and distinct from the image on the web page. Thus, the exact same image can be used with different code which results in a different hot link. That is, a user will see the exact same image, but the target of the hot link provided by the web page will be different.

With the present invention the "hot link" data is embedded directly in the image. Thus, where ever that image appears, the hot link in the image will take a user back to the target site defined by the original hot link. It is practically impossible for anyone to

change the hot link data. With a conventional hot link data (which is separate from the image) a user can easily use the image and change the target of the hot link.

The examiner cited two references. The Shear reference (patent 4,977,594) shows a system that is specifically designed to eliminate the need for the use of a remote data base. The Shear reference relates to a technique for preventing unauthorized access to a data base which is "on-site" as contrasted to being remote. Practically the first three columns of the Shear reference go into great depth about the problem created when data bases are distributed on CD ROMs rather than being maintained centrally. Shear then describes a system for prevention unauthorized access to an "on-site" data base.

The only communication in Shear's system relates to the fact that "database usage information is stored at a user's site and is periodically communicated to a central billing facility" (column 5 lines 33 to 36). Shear also indicates at column 9 lines 33-49 that the decoder/biller block 300 may be located remotely from the host computer.

The examiner relates the network recited as the last element in applicant's claim 1 to the discussion in column 1 lines 33-49 of Shear which relates to the fact than many on-line data bases include abstracts or bibliographic data rather than full text of the original documents.

The examiner also tries to correlate the three computers recited in applicant's claims to the three elements shown in Figure 1 of Shear. In fact the three elements shown in Figure 1 of Shear comprise a single computer system 200 which has an attached storage medium 100 and attached decoder/biller 300.

Applicant notes that at column 9 lines 26 to 33 Shear indicates that decoder/biller block 300 is a

"a hard ware unit (or card) electrically connected to and located in proximity to (or within) host computer 200, or computer software executing on the host computer. Alternatively, decoder/billing block 300 might be located remotely to

host computer 200 and communicate with the host computer via a data communication network or a telephone line."

The network recited as the last element of applicant's claim 1 is not just a generic "network" which connects computers together. The network recited in applicant's claim is a network that has a specific function related to other elements recited in the claim. The examiner is in effect looking at the claim as a catalog of three computers connected by a network. The examiner has ignored the specific functions recited for each of the three recited computers and the function recited for the network. It is the functions recited for the applicant's computers and the applicant's network which give the applicant's system the ability to provide internet hot links that are not separate and distinct from the images associated with the hot links.

The examiner also cited the Powell reference (US Patent 5,721,788). The Powell reference shows a method and system for embedding data in an image by adjusting or changing selected pixel values. The examiner indicates that at column 1 lines 12-61 and column 2 lines 60 through column 3 line 17 the Powell reference discloses:

"a method and system for digital image signal pictures which provides for automatically downloading data, including empirical data sets, for a plurality of computer sites"

In fact at column 1 lines 12-61 the Powell reference merely indicates that it is common to widely distribute copies of images. At column 2 lines 60 through column 3 line 17 Powell describes a local computer system which includes a scanner, and a printer.

With respect to claim 4, the examiner indicates that in Powell at column 1, lines 12-49,

column 2, line 60, column 3 line 17, and  
column 5, line 44 through column 6 line 43

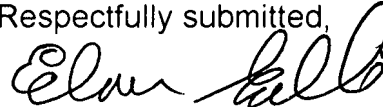
" the watermarks includes information identifying a World Wide Web site" This statement by the examiner is a clear misreading of the reference. There is no teaching or suggestion in Powell that a watermark can contain information identifying a World Wide Web site, and more particularly there is no suggestion of teaching in Powell of the

advantages that can be obtained by an interconnected network of computers (as recited in applicant's claims) which rely on the use of watermarks which identify World Wide Web sites.

There is no suggestion in Powell of how one can take advantage of the characteristics of a watermark to provide "hot links" which can not be changed. The invention which applicant is claiming is a system including three computers each of which have a specific defined function and a network which also has a specifically defined function. The applicant's combination provides advantages which are not described or suggested by the prior art.

Since the cited references do not show or suggested the novel combination described and claimed by the applicant, allowance of claims 1-5 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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